



News Release

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Officials Break Ground for Champlain Border Station Project

Federal and local officials and other dignitaries gathered today to officially break ground for the next phase of work at the Champlain Land Port of Entry in Champlain, NY. Among those participating in the event were Senator Charles Schumer, Congressman John McHugh and Congressman John Sweeney, joined by representatives of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection, other federal, state and local agencies.

"This project is symbolic of the cooperation with other branches of government and with local communities that is essential in the nation's effort to protect the borders against terrorists and their weapons," said **Robert C. Bonner, Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security.**

"GSA is very pleased to support the needs of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the other federal agencies here at Champlain as they work to protect our nation's borders," stated **Eileen Long-Chelales, Regional Administrator of GSA's Northeast and Caribbean Region.** "This project at the Champlain Land Port of Entry is also critical to the continued effectiveness of one of New York State's key commercial corridors. This groundbreaking signifies the ongoing progress of the government's project to expand, modernize, and enhance security at this border station."

"Today is a great day. After years of work, we are finally about to achieve the dream of a Port of Excellence here at Champlain. I remember the frigid day in March of 2000 when Garry Douglas brought me here to see first hand, the backups that were hampering cross-border commerce. I became convinced that we must build a modern facility here, and set off to work with John McHugh and others. I look forward to returning soon when the project is completed," said **Senator Charles Schumer.**

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"This groundbreaking signifies a major achievement for both residents and businesses in Northeastern New York, and all along the I-87 corridor. This is a crucial component to our region's economic development efforts, not to mention its importance to ensuring the security of our nation's Northern border. As a longtime supporter of this project, I have worked hard to ensure that federal funds be committed to the Champlain-Lacolle Border Crossing, as they have again in this year's House Transportation spending bill. Between the total expected funding of more than \$80 million and the physical groundbreaking today, we are on track for the project's target completion date of September 2008. I am thrilled to see the Border Crossing become reality, and will continue to advocate for it and other important issues as part of my commitment to strengthening our borders," said **Congressman John M. McHugh** (R-NY).

Rep. John Sweeney (R-Clifton Park) said, "I've worked hard with Rep. McHugh over the last several years and been successful at securing over \$89 million in federal funding for projects at the Champlain Border Crossing. In a post-9/11 world, a smooth, efficient border crossing is critical to not only the economic vitality of border communities, but to the safety and security of all Americans. That is why, in addition to the funding we have worked to secure to date, I have been leading the fight to change the formula to distribute homeland security funding so it is allocated based on threat, risk and vulnerability. The formula I have long advocated, rightly addresses the importance of border security which ultimately benefits our national security."

"These important improvements will help to ease traffic congestion and increase safety for the more than three million motorists who use the Champlain border crossing each year," **Governor Pataki** said. "We're proud to be a part of this unique project that will continue to strengthen the economic ties that exist between the United States and Canada, enabling us to build upon the \$15 billion worth of trade that occurs at this crossing on an annual basis."

This phase of the project to enhance the Champlain Land Port of Entry will include construction of a new 2-story cargo processing building with eight commercial vehicle inspection bays and office space for supporting staff; new commercial vehicle inspection canopy and booths; and associated site improvements. Site improvements include access ramps and roadway from the Canadian border and a new and significantly expanded truck staging area.

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In June GSA announced the award of a contract to Bette & Cring, LLC of Watertown, NY. Smith-Miller +Hawkinson Architects of New York City designed the project and Pike/Hill Joint Venture of Rochester, NY is the construction Quality Manager on the job.

The project will take place to the immediate west of the existing facility and will not interfere with the 24 hour, 7 day a week operation of the existing facility. Work on this phase of the project is expected to be completed by the end of 2006. Future tenants of the facility include Customs and Border Protection, Food and Drug Administration, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. General Services Administration.

GSA is a centralized federal procurement; property management, and policy agency, created by Congress to improve government efficiency and help federal agencies better serve the public. On behalf of federal agencies, GSA acquires office space, equipment, telecommunications, information technology, supplies and services. It also plays a key role in developing and implementing government wide policies. GSA's 13,000 associates provide services and solutions for office operations for more than one million federal workers located in more than 8,000 government-owned and leased buildings in 2,000 U.S. communities. GSA's Northeast and Caribbean Region and its 800 associates, deliver agency services to federal customers in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Additional information regarding GSA programs and policies can be found at the agency's website: www.gsa.gov.